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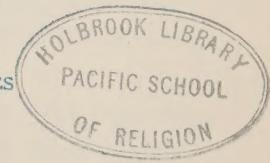
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the WORLD ALLIANCE for INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP THROUGH THE CHURCHES
the WORLD ALLIANCE of YOUNG MEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATIONS
the WORLD'S YOUNG WOMEN'S CHRISTIAN ASSOCIATION
the WORLD'S STUDENT CHRISTIAN FEDERATION
the WORLD'S SUNDAY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION



The aim of the Ecumenical Press Service is to keep its readers informed of trends of thought and opinion in and about the Churches and Christian movements. It is therefore not to be held responsible for opinions expressed in its news items.

No. 13/14

Fourteenth Year

April 8, 1947

GREAT BRITAIN

Primate's Easter Message

The Lenten Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of Canterbury could not be published owing to the suppression of newspapers during the weeks of shortage of fuel. The Archbishop has now issued his Letter which appeared in the "Canterbury Diocesan Gazette" and from which we quote the following:

... "In speaking of the spiritual use of Lent I referred to the grave conditions in many parts of the world, which are in one way or another all evidences of the sinful conditions of men and of the havoc thereby wrought. Referring to a request of the Lower House of Canterbury that there might be appointed a period of penitence for the inhumanity of man against man, I said that Lent sufficiently provides such a period, and indeed compels us to realise again the terrible burden of human sin which Christ has borne and bears for us, to deepen our penitence, and still, because Easter comes, to see the hope that is set before us and to labour in hope..."

After referring to the Moscow Conference, to the situation in India and in Palestine as special points upon which the prayers of the faithful should be focussed, the Archbishop concluded:

"Then there is the position of our own country. I said something of that last month; since then it has been made plain to everyone that to maintain itself, to recover lost ground and to raise its standards of social life, the nation has before it a task lengthier and even more exacting than that of the war years. What is at stake is the whole future and stability of our country." Very much depends upon leaders, inside and outside the Government, whose task it must be to concentrate the national will and purpose upon an united endeavour. But fundamentally the appeal is once more directly to the character of our people: the challenge is a spiritual one... The Church must consider how best it can speak to that challenge."

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINFloods in the Fen Country

After the severe cold of this winter, England is now suffering from devastating floods. Parish life is also hardly hit, as the description of the Isle of Ely in the "Church Times" of March 28, 1947 shows:

"The Fenland floods are rapidly reducing the Isle of Ely to the water-logged waste which it was in the time of Hereward the Wake. For one or two days Ely was almost cut off from the rest of the country by road and rail.

The cathedral itself stands high above the great expanse of waters spread out round it. In the little town at the foot of its great towers, the war seems to have come back again. 'Ducks' and heavy Army transport are parked in the streets, and the palace kitchens are the canteen headquarters for the troops. The fine churches of the Fenland are safe... For the most part, the ancient churches stand on the summit of what were fen islets in mediaeval times. Today they stand again above the flood waters in the secure positions our ancestors chose for them."

In some places church halls are used to house evacuated families. "In the Norfolk fen, Southery might be a village behind the front line in a great battle. Last week German prisoners of war were working day and night filling the sandbags for the great fortification which is being built by soldiers on the Littleport road. The water from the broken bank of the Wissey was then lapping at the foot of the six-foot wall of sandbags, and the road behind was crowded with Army transport, mobile canteens, driven cattle, and refugees carrying odds and ends of their household goods. But this great effort to hold the waters has proved in vain."

The newspapers concluded: "It is impossible at present to estimate the loss caused by the disaster, but there is no doubt that it will be very serious... It will be far beyond what any relief fund could hope to meet and for many parishes it will mean a sudden and pathetic reversal from a prosperous agriculture to poverty and unemployment..."

E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINFree Churches Accept Archbishop's Offer

At the annual Free Church Congress held in London in the second half of March, the General Secretary, Rev. H.T. Wigley, informed the Council that "all the constituent denominations had intimated willingness to accept the invitation of the Archbishop of Canterbury to enter into conversations regarding inter-communion" (see I.C.P.I.S. No. 40, 1946).

The following Churches are represented in the Free Church Federal Council: Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland, Congregational Union of England and Wales, Methodist Church, Presbyterian Church of England, Independant Methodists, Wesleyan Reformed Union, Moravian Church and the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. It counts 7,000,000 members and adherents.

E.P.S. Geneva

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Closing of Second Term at the Ecumenical Institute

On Thursday, March 25th, the Ecumenical Institute, Bossey, celebrated the closing session of its second term. The courses had been attended by 38 young theological students from fifteen countries.

The first two speeches were made by students, a Hungarian and a Dutchman, who both emphasised the importance of the course "as a lived fellowship". "I felt here as a member of the family, like a finger of an outstretched hand", said the Hungarian, adding that only as Christians of many lands stretched out their hands to each other could a world church fellowship be created. "The course gave us a world wide outlook", emphasised the Dutchman, "although it made us realise that theological questions are not so simple as we thought. But precisely because it is so, the experience of the 'oecumene' cannot be made early enough."

Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, General Secretary of the World Council of Churches, emphasised in his closing address the pioneering character of the Bossey Institute. "You have done with us pioneering work", he said. "Many look to Geneva as a place where an ecumenical orchestra plays a symphony. The students have now learned that there is no finished orchestra. We try to play together and sometimes there are discords as well as harmony. The ecumenical future depends on the renewal of every single Church. The repentance of all the Churches is necessary. Therefore everyone of you should go back to his community with a firm desire to introduce a new ecumenical spirit."

Dr. Hans Hoekendijk, director of the winter term, summarised the course saying that its basic idea has been that the Churches cannot renew themselves, only Christ can renew them. The renewal of the Churches is not a less miracle than the resurrection from the dead.

E.P.S. Geneva

ITALYProtestants Plead for Religious Freedom

Although the newspapers have announced that the Lateran pacts have been included in the Italian Constitution, we give the following information concerning the visit paid by the representatives of the religious minorities in Italy to the President of the Republic.

On March 22nd, Monsieur Enrico De Nicola, provisional chief of State, received three deputies from the Constituent Assembly, who introduced to him the representatives of the religious minorities in Italy: Pastor Virgilio Sommani, President of the Federal Council of Evangelical Churches in Italy and Moderator of the Waldensian Church, Monsieur Raffaele Cantoni, President of the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy, and Messieurs Giovanni Gonnet, Giorgio Peyrot and Mario Alberto Rollier of the Waldensian Churches of Rome and Milan.

Pastor Sommani showed the President some publications sent by the organs of the different communities represented in the delegation to the deputies of the Constituent Assembly, for the purpose

of expressing their ideas on the problems concerning religious freedom and the best means of guaranteeing it in the future Constitution of the Italian Republic. From the message read by Pastor Sommani we quote the following:

"The delegation is convinced that its requests constitute the fundamental requirements to enable the different religious confessions to live in peace in the new Republic, especially after the persecutions through which some of them have recently passed.

"This purpose will only be achieved if full and complete equality of rights is guaranteed to all denominations: any difference in treatment would only create privileged positions which are incompatible with democratic liberty, because this can only exist on a basis of equal duties and equal rights for everyone. All that could only be regarded as lack of respect for the faith professed by the majority of Italians, or as an attack on religious peace in Italy. On the other hand, this religious peace would only be disturbed if the Constitution failed to respect the three fundamental principles of freedom of conscience, equality of all confessions and the non-confessionalism of the State. The representatives of the religious minorities in Italy at the present time, while expressing their regret that there is no immediate agreement on these principles which are fundamental to democratic life today, hope that the Italian Constitution will be able to proclaim these principles in their integrity, thereby gaining the respect and satisfaction of all the different branches of faith and of opinion." E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Help for Russian Orphans

The "Church World Service", joint Protestant relief and reconstruction agency in U.S.A., has agreed to undertake relief shipments to the Soviet Union and will provide clothing to 100,000 Russian war orphans. The Church World Service has taken over the clothing project begun last year by the National Interfaith Committee of the American Society for Russian Relief, which recently was dissolved. A statement by the executive director of Church World Service, and the chairman of the new Interchurch Committee of the American Russian Institute (see E.P.S. No. 11), declared the project "will not only render an important service in terms of relief, but will also serve as an expression of friendship from American church people to our friends in the Soviet Union... The Soviet Government will pay ocean freight on the shipments, which will be distributed through Russian welfare organisations." E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

A Film Star Helps Church World Service

Ingrid Bergman, stage, screen and radio star, has completed a radio show sponsored by Church World Service to help raise money for world-wide relief. The programme, called "Flood Tide", will be distributed to 300 broadcasting stations throughout the U.S.A. It deals with the heroic resistance of the Dutch people on Walcheren and the reconstruction of their flooded island. The radio show will be sponsored by councils of Churches and religious education. It was produced by the Joint Religious Radio Committee. E.P.S. Geneva

GREAT BRITAINNew Religious Policy at the B.B.C.

The British Broadcasting Corporation has hitherto allowed the positive expression of different religious faiths but has excluded direct criticism of the Christian faith. A broader policy is indicated by the following statement in the "Radio Times":

"It is the view of the B.B.C. that broadcasting has a responsibility to do what it can to meet the need of the millions of people who are today hungering after information on spiritual issues. The corporation's highest duty in this as in other fields is towards the search for truth."

The governors recognise that this must involve the broadcasting of conflicting views, but they are of the opinion that affirmations of widely differing beliefs and of unbelief can be made constructively, and discussions conducted on such a plan that the controversy, which is bound to be an incidental to the primary purpose, shall not wound reasonable people or transgress the bounds of courtesy and good taste. The B.B.C. will exercise its editorial responsibility to this end.

Such a broadening of policy will be gradual and experimental. It must move within the climate of public opinion. But the B.B.C. seeks the freest possible expression of serious and responsible thought. All broadcasting in the field of religion, philosophy, and ethics must be imbued with a deep seriousness and high purpose, and truth must be sought in such a manner that it will be prized and respected wherever it is found."

E.P.S. Geneva

FRANCEEvangelisation Effort at Marseilles

In 1946 the evangelisation Commission of the Church of Marseilles decided to make a big evangelisation effort during the winter of 1947, on the same lines as the one arranged in the Wagram hall in Paris. This new effort was effected from February 17 to 23.

"Evangile et Liberté" publishes an article about it (March 26, 1947) under the striking title: "The Message of Christ to the People of France": "A week ago an enormous banner and three hundred posters were asking the people of Marseilles this question: 'Has Jesus Christ still anything to say to us?' Each parish was responsible for distributing tracts and placing them on view in the shops in one part of the town. On Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning, a loud-speaker van drove all round Marseilles inviting people to attend the meeting.

On Sunday morning after the service, the Rialto cinema was filled with an attentive crowd: 1,500 sitting and 500 standing! A loud-speaker was calling out messages in the street. The meeting was presided over by Professor Carrière. Pastor Benoit first of all drew a striking picture of the distress of man today, and then went on to present the personality of Jesus Christ, the only Saviour. Pastor Roser then showed the power of Jesus Christ in the lives of individuals and in the problems of peace and justice. Again and again the audience expressed their sympathy by applauding. Many

well-known faces were noticed among the crowd; but quite one-third of the audience were non-church-goers. This is not a large proportion of fresh listeners. But one thing is certain: the success of this first effort was proved by the large crowd, the attention of the public and their sympathy. God has blessed us far more than we had ever hoped..."

E.P.S. Geneva

GERMANY

The Unity of the E.K.I.D.

The Regional Superintendent of Saxony, Lic. Lau (Dresden) writes in a printed letter "To all the pastors of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church of Saxony" as follows, on the necessity of maintaining the unity of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID):

"As a fruit of the Lutheran belief expressed in the Lutheran union it is to be hoped that a regeneration should take place in preaching, as it again receives substance and strength from the confession of the Lutheran Church... The Lutheran union has its dangers. The main one is the exclusion of the Evangelicals who do not admit the Lutheran confession. There can be no union between Lutherans unless a limit is drawn excluding those who cannot come in. But it would be good if the limits were not defined too sharply and no barriers erected. Not only the opponents of the Lutheran Constitution, but also those who created and represented it, referred to the Declaration of Barmen in 1934, at which Lutherans, Reformed and United were all represented. We Lutherans also, who wish to realise this, will admit that we have no right to deny a unity which we were once able to recognise with a good conscience. We will remain open to all the brethren."

At the conference in memory of deceased pastors held in Bad Boll on January 20, 1947, the following resolution was accepted:

"We were united at the front, in the hospitals, or as prisoners together with brethren from the different Evangelical Churches; together we heard the reading of God's Word, prayed, and partook of the Holy Sacrament. We knew that we were members of one body in Christ. The differences in teaching between Lutherans and Reformed, which seem important to us, no longer divided us. We beg the Church leaders, when making their decision concerning the future form of the EKID to bear this in mind. We were united in our opposition to all who despised the Word of God. This fact is the greatest spiritual fruit of our experiences during the war. It would be in contradiction to God's Will if we were to turn the EKID back into a mere union of Churches, and would undermine the work begun at Treysa. We pray with Christ: ut omnes unum sint."

E.P.S. Geneva

Sending Heifers to Europe

The Heifer Project for Relief and Rehabilitation is sponsored by the Brethren Service Committee, the Administrative Agency of the Church of the Brethren in U.S.A. for Christian humanitarian service around the world. The Committee wants to make available gifts of heifers or young dairy cows to needy people as a symbol of interest



and concern for their welfare. The distribution of gifts is made "on the basis of need with no discrimination of race, creed or political affiliation, in the name of Christ the Saviour of all mankind."

In this effort many groups of Protestant, Catholic and Jewish people are assisting by contributions of heifers and cash with which to purchase heifers. The Committee works in close collaboration with the Evangelical and Reformed Church in U.S.A., the Mennonite Central Committee, the Northern Baptists, the Methodist Committee for Overseas Relief, the Roman Catholic Rural Life Association and the Rural Life Association for America (which is not a church organ). It collaborates also with the Lutheran and Congregational Churches and with the Church World Service.

The Heifer Project has been carried on in cooperation with the UNRRA programme in countries where this was possible. In other countries direct contact was made by Brethren Service Committee representatives. The Committee has already sent 500 heifers to France, 3 or 4 shipments to Poland, others to Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Greece, Ethiopia, 720 heifers to China and quite recently 650 to Italy.

E.P.S. Geneva

EGYPT

Fightin Illiteracy

On February 15, 1947 Dr Frank Laubach, well-known missionary, finished a month in Cairo helping devise charts and lessons to teach Arabic by the simplest method to Arabic illiterates. This is continuing with cooperation among Christian missions, secular education and government. "The Arabic lessons are going to be beautiful!" says Dr Laubach. "Because of the wonderful assistance we have had from everyone on all sides we are going to have both beautiful and economical lessons, and everyone will be helped. There is no opposition when we give people what they both need and want, in the spirit of Christ."

Now Dr Laubach is in the Near East assisting in literacy campaigns in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. The cooperation of government, educational and other groups in this work of promoting adult literacy has helped tremendously in the campaign in the Near East. The difficult follow-up lies ahead, when the new literates must be given suitable literature, and therein lies one of the greatest challenges to Christian missions today.

E.P.S. Geneva

UNITED STATES

Missionaries for Japan

The chairman of the Japan Committee of the Foreign Missions Conference of North America announced that American Protestant Churches are planning to send 500 missionaries to Japan within the next three years. A deputation of American church leaders will go to Japan to confer with Christian leaders there on details of missionary plan. Most of the missionaries will be permanent workers. Some will be specialists in medicine, agriculture, and science. The Committee is studying a plan to ship 100 huts and prefabricated houses to Japan as living quarters for the missionaries, and is also financing the erection of 50 temporary buildings.

E.P.S. Geneva

HUNGARYAn Easter Message

From Dr Laszlo Pap, General Secretary of the Hungarian Committee of the World Council of Churches comes the following Easter message:

"Beloved brethren! In the name of the Hungarian part of Christ's Church, we send you our Easter Greeting with the eternal Christian Easter salutation: Christ is risen! We sincerely desire that this Easter message should be the glorious profession of faith of our Churches in the crucified and risen Christ as the Lord of Life. Let our hearts be imbued with the Easter joy that Christ is living and has defeated death. Let the faith well up in our souls which are aroused and nourished by the life of the resurrected Christ in the living members of His Body, the Church. Let us be filled with the Christian hope of the resurrection of our bodies and the eternal life above, and may Christ victorious put courage into our hearts.

We offer up thanks for all those expressions of Christian love, the gifts with which, in the name of Christ, people have hastened to the assistance of our Churches. In the light of Easter, we clearly see that the communion of saints, the community of life and service of the members with Christ, springs from and depends on our union with the Lord. Christ's love penetrates and is active in the loving service of the Christian. This is why we praise Him at every manifestation of brotherly love, as it is His love leaning down to us. We must gratefully recognise that in spite of our sins, Christ upholds us with His merciful Love when He allows the communion of saints and the empire of love to become reality in the prayers offered up and the sacrifices undergone for one another."

E.P.S. Geneva

U.S.S.R.Gifts of Scriptures from United States

The correspondent of the Religious News Service (New York) in Moscow reports that Patriarch Alexei has acknowledged a gift of 105,000 Gospels and New Testaments from the American Bible Society. The consignment consisted of 500 Greek New Testaments, 5,000 Russian New Testaments and Psalms, and 100,000 Russian Gospels. Expressing thanks for the Bibles and Testaments Patriarch Alexei said they had been distributed to the Orthodox Theological Academy in Moscow and the monastery of Troitze-Sergievsky Lavra, famous religious establishment outside the capital where relics of St Sergius are preserved.

E.P.S. Geneva

ERRATUM

In number 10, page 6, in the news-item on Russia, we mentioned by mistake that Professor Poltoratsky, lecturer at the Academy in Moscow, was a priest of the Institute Saint-Denis in Paris. We were confusing him with his namesake, Monsieur Nicolas Poltoratsky of Paris, who is now on a visit to the Patriarch of Moscow.

E.P.S. Geneva

